

REMARKS

Applicants have reviewed, and carefully considered the non-final Office Action dated November 16, 2004. Claims 1-22 are pending. Claims 1-15 and 20-22 are rejected. Claims 16-19 are objected to. Claims 1 and 20 are amended.

Applicants appreciate Examiner Thai's indication of allowability of claims 16-19.

In paragraph 4 on page 2 of the Office Action, claims 20-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Applicants respectfully traverse the § 112, second paragraph rejection. However, in order to advance prosecution of Applicants' Application, claim 20 has been amended. Applicants submit that the amendment to claim 20 does not narrow or change the scope of Applicants' invention.

In paragraph 6 on page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-15 and 20-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Menon (U.S. Patent No. 6,397,229) in view of Tuma (U.S. Patent No. 5,070,474).

Applicants respectfully traverse the § 103(a) rejection. In a teleconference call subsequent to the mailing of the subject Office Action, Examiner Thai indicated that claims 6-22 were in condition for allowance.

In response to the Examiner's comments from the teleconference, Applicants have amended claim 1 to track the language of independent claims 6, 11 and 20. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is now in condition for allowance.

Because claims 2-5 depend from independent claim 1, and include the features recited in the independent claims as well as additional features, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-5 are also in condition for allowance. Nevertheless, Applicants are not conceding the correctness of the Examiner's rejection with respect to such dependent claims and reserves the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

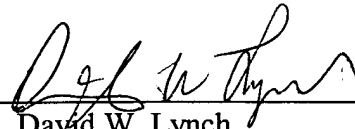
On the basis of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of this application and its allowance are requested. Please charge/credit Deposit Account No. 50-0996 (IBMS.002PA) for any deficiencies/overpayments.

Application No.: 09/692,957
Docket No. IBMS.002PA/ SJO920000056US1
Date of Office Action Response: February 16, 2005
Reply to Office Action Dated November 16, 2004

If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues concerning this communication, please contact Applicants' attorney of record, David W. Lynch at 651-686-6633 Ext 116.

Respectfully submitted,

CRAWFORD MAUNU PLLC
1270 Northland Drive, Suite 390
Saint Paul, MN 55120
(651) 686-6633

By: 
Name: David W. Lynch
Reg. No.: 36,204